

January 26, 2007

Good afternoon chairperson and committee.

My name is Char Harasymczuk, for the record that is (C-H-A-R H-A-R-A-S-Y-M-C-Z-U-K) and I am president of Montana Association of the Deaf. It is with my deepest regrets that I cannot be here in person to testify on HB 354

I represent the Deaf people in Montana as well as myself on HB 354. So many deaf children in mainstreamed programs do not have qualified interpreters. Over the years I have watched children suffer with a lack of education. They miss out on a lot of information they could get if they had better interpreters. With alarming reports on language level, it is scary to watch deaf children from functioning well in society. Not many are capable of finding a job. It is time that we do something about upgrading our standards to a higher level.

We need to establish some kind of standards for our sign language interpreters for our deaf children. We just cannot hire someone who just took a sign class. A class doesn't make a person expert in something, but with intense training an interpreter can do much for a deaf child in the classroom.

HB 354 will do a lot good for our children in mainstreamed programs and I ask you to please take a close look at it.

Thank you.

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